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## OBSERVATIONS.

The observation of the twenty-second day of April has been recommended by many state superintendants of schools as Bird day. Superintendent Jackson of our own state concurs in and emphasizes the need of such a day. The mental stimulation resulting from all intelligent contemplation of nature is well understood by the new teacher of children. Things that fly and crawl or that merely stand and grow are being watched by the sympathetic little scientists that the schools are now turning out. THE COURIER has received from a source not clearly stated, a book whose covers are ornamented with carefully colored plates of a pigeon and a quail. The exquisitely delicate penciling of the wing feathers of the quail and the prismatic purples of the neck and head feathers of the pigeon are reproduced with an exactness exceeding the art of the painter. From a preface I gather that the covers are those of a Chicago monthly publication called "Birds" It is a magazine calculated to direct the attention of readers, young and old, to the beauty and utility of birds. The copy at hand contains suggestions mainly in verse for recitations. A general observation and celebration of

Bird day and the lessons on birds, which come between, will do as much to enthrone the summer visitors from the south in the hearts of children, who are always faithful vassals of something or other, as the George Washington day exercises have done for the father of our country.

The withdrawal of the cadet battalion from the university to garrison the Indian outposts will be most depressing. The soldierly young fellows in blue have been a characteristic of Lincoln streets for so many seasons that their disappearance before the time of the summer vacation will cause an aching void to many besides mothers, sisters and sweethearts but the actual experience of garrison discipline and the expeditions connected with an outpost of the army is what most of the young fellows have been longing for and they would welcome even the hardships of such a life eagerly. A summer at Fort Robinson, Assinaboine, Crook or Riley with the pay of a private, or commissioned officer, as the case might be, would answer the question of summer occupation which torments the boys and their parents every vacation. Although service at a fort is very seldom dangerous, the discipline is rigid and there is nothing to remind the recruit of the play-soldier experiences of the military school or university where he learned how to stand up straight. The university battalion, as a whole, is looking forward to assignment to duty in nearby forts with pleasure.

The establishment of a chair of domestic science by the regents at their late meeting is in the direction of the utilitarian and immediate application of university lectures, which is an especial characteristic of the western university. Miss Bouton, who has consented to undertake the duties of a lecturer on domestic science, in addition to her laboratory work, is well qualified to make the experiment a success. She has been lecturing for some years on the chemistry of foods, so that so far as she is concerned, it is not an experiment. The growth of the agricultural college whose curriculum bears the same relation to chemistry as domestic economics is an indication of the popularity that awaits a properly developed department of the kind just established.

The appointment of Mrs. H. H. Wilson as dean of the women of the university is one which has met with much approval. Among the alumna of the state university Mrs. Wilson holds almost a unique position. She has a wide acquaintance among the club women of the city and state, and

she has kept in touch with the contemporary life and learning by taking a course of lectures at the university on two separate occasions since her graduation. She has also assisted the faculty in entertaining the students and possesses their acquaintance and confidence. The confluent experiences gained in clubs, in under graduate and post graduate work, in church and charity work, in university and in general society, as well as from the training of children and in the direction of an orderly household eminently qualify Mrs. Wilson for the position which she has undertaken to fill. Besides bringing the clubs of the state, through books and lectures, into more direct relation with the university, Mrs. Wilson will deliver a course of lectures on the English novels for which her post graduate studies have especially prepared her. To the undergraduate young women in the university she will be a friend who will present their needs to the governing body. It is hoped that from this beginning the disposition to recognize the coeducational character of the school may expand until the university is at least equal in this respect to other western institutions.

The movement in the new council to reduce expenses to correspond with the income of the city is watched with interest. Of course salaries can be reduced to a point where self-respecting and efficient men cannot accept them without reducing the standard of living below the rate which custom and habit has made respectable and necessary. When this point is passed only incompetent men will accept city positions and the service suffers in consequence. Though the desire of really able men to hold an office which pays only a small fraction of the amount which they are competent to earn by unofficial industry, is what past masters in human nature have never been able to understand. The salaries therefore, can be very much reduced without decreasing to a perceptible degree the crowd of honest and clever men who hunger and thirst after office. Compared with the amount of loafing that firemen and policemen do the salary seems large. The duties of the policemen in a place the size of Lincoln require very little exertion. A murder does not occur once a year, a robbery of any consequence is infrequent and the only occasion for an exhibition of courage and presence of mind is when a plain or decorated and unarmed drunk has to be clubbed into a willingness to ride in the patrol wagon. At other times the policeman walks up the principal streets, swings his club and walks back again.

The firemen have a little more to do, systematically they must groom and exercise the horses, shine the engines and form the most impressive part of a country street procession. Several times a year they must exert themselves strenuously, but their customary attitude is one of waiting and complete repose. Under these conditions the police and fire employes receive higher wages than their employers, the citizens. As to the clerical and executive officers of the city their compensation does not seem to be unreasonable, though it has always been apparent that the number of city employes was greater than the amount of work to be performed. If each officer and employe was required to perform 365 days work in a year, barring legal holidays, the number of jobs would be much fewer and the amount of faithful service increased. The council has evidently taken this view of the matter very much to the satisfaction of the taxpayers whose turn seems to have come if it is last.

Of course if the fire department made any pretensions to the discipline and effectiveness of a city fire department in good standing their present salaries are not too large. But the lack of discipline and concerted action in case of fire is only too apparent to a casual looker on. The salary of the chief should be enlarged rather than curtailed and an educated and experienced chief secured from a metropolitan fire department. Only by such means can the property of the citizens be protected. As to the present department the price is certainly too high considering its inefficiency.

The senate of the United States has been called the millionaires' club. It has been frequently accused of too great a tenderness for bonds and bankers. Many have supposed that the senate had insurmountable objections to measures or bills having a tendency to depreciate stocks, whatever the sentimental or patriotic reason for their enactment. The senate is a body of much older men than those in the house of representatives. To many of the senators their salary is pin money, which they spend on the elegant superfluities of Washington existence. The fluctuations of stocks have a direct bearing upon their own income by which what they eat and wear, and smoke, and where they lounge, read and sleep is regulated. Yet the rich comfort-loving old men of the senate have been making fiery, impassioned speeches trying to persuade the young men of the house, whose income will be just the same whether stocks rise or fall, that true Americanism consists, at this junct-